

and he no more regretted his action than he had hesitated in taking it. Kappus, man of less iron reserve, blubbered audibly as he carried his poor burden from the room.

"Shall we recommence, sir?" asked the Freiherr.

"If you please."

Again the Freiherr attacked, only now with redoubled energy and recklessness. Twice Meyer slipped past his guard, but each time something checked the lunge that should have sent his blade hilt-deep through the old nobleman's breast-bone.

Meyer was no sentimentalist, and chivalry was certainly not his leading characteristic; but it was so easy to kill that he could not harden his heart for the killing. Had his own life been in danger he would not have hesitated. But his antagonist was old and at his mercy, and all that was good in the Jew's heart cried out against the coup de grace.

Furious at the consciousness that he was being spared, the Freiherr pressed hotly in a savage determination to compel his adversary to adopt a less passive attitude. A fierce thrust, met by a strong parry, sent the old gentleman's sword whizzing through the air in the direction of the dining-table. Meyer dropped the point of his own weapon, and waited politely for his antagonist to regain his. The Freiherr strode slowly across the room, picked up his sword by the blade, and offered it hilt first to General Meyer.

"Since you will not kill me, I surrender," he said. "I should have preferred the former alternative."

Meyer took the weapon and formally handed it over to the officer who had presided over the encounter.

"Their is still another alternative, Freiherr," he said. "Give me your word of honour that you will not aid and abet Cyril of Wolfnsaden in any way whatsoever, and you may retain your liberty."

"Does that suggestion emanate from the Social democrat Prime Minister?" asked the Freiherr scornfully.

Meyer touched his breast.

"No," he replied, "it only emanates from the heart of an old Jew. Nevertheless, I take full responsibility for it."

"I thank you," said the Freiherr, "but I refuse. My colleagues are in the Strafeburg, and it would ill behove me not to join them. All the same, I have this to say: throughout this business you have behaved in a manner not unbecoming an officer and a gentleman."

Meyer coughed, and a faint colour mantled his cheek.

"I have no desire to hurry you, my lord," he said after an awkward pause, "but—"

"Quite so," interrupted the Freiherr. "I have but one question to ask. Was it Herr Saunders who told you I was here at my house? Was it he who sent you here to arrest me?"

"No," replied Meyer. "I have not seen Herr Saunders since five o'clock this evening."

The Freiherr sighed.

"I am glad—very glad," he said. "Gentlemen, lead on to the Strafeburg. I follow you."

CHAPTER XXVI.

A Reappearance.

AFTER his disturbing interview with the Red Virgin, Saunders mounted the stairs to his own apartments. He was so bewildered by that young woman's behaviour that he was not at all sure whether he had done his cause good or the reverse by the interview. She had made love to him, and he had rejected her affection, and by all the laws of sex she should now prove herself his arch-enemy. But somehow the laws of sex seemed less applicable to the Red Virgin than to any woman he had ever met, and it was not his habit to anticipate the worst.

In his sitting-room, he found his wife and to his surprise, the Perownes.

"I am glad to see you back, Robert," said Mrs. Saunders, rising. "I was beginning to feel anxious." She looked relieved, but not so relieved as she felt.

"That is a weakness you must not



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